



***Echiniscus quitensis*, a new species of tardigrade from Ecuador (Heterotardigrada: Echiniscidae)**

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Abstract

A new species of tardigrade, *Echiniscus quitensis* **sp. n.**, is described. The third unpaired plate is absent but the corresponding area is sculptured; terminal plate unafaceted; cirrus A is the only trunk appendage present; the cuticular plates have small dots, joined to one another by very thin stripes difficult to see, and light points; the anterior portion of the paired plates II and III, the anterior portion of the median plate 2 and the area corresponding to the median plate 3 have only large polygonal dots. Internal claws with a spur. *Echiniscus quitensis* **sp. n.** differs from *E. rufoviridis* in lacking a delimited third median plate, in having the terminal plate unafaceted, shorter claws, a spur on the internal claws and in some characteristic of the plate ornamentation. The new species is very similar to *E. charrua* but it differs from it in some characteristics of the plate ornamentation.

Key words: Tardigrada, Ecuador, *Echiniscus quitensis* **sp. n.**, *E. rufoviridis*, *E. charrua*

Introduction

Some years ago W. Maucci kindly sent me a slide with one specimen labelled *Echiniscus rufoviridis* du Bois-Reymond Marcus, 1944 collected in Ecuador (Quito). I studied this specimen and I noted that it cannot be attributed to *E. rufoviridis* but to a new species here described and named *Echiniscus quitensis* **sp. n.**

Materials, methods and type repository

Besides the holotype deposited in the collection of Binda and Pilato (Museum of the Department of Animal Biology, University of Catania, Italy), 37 specimens are deposited in the collection of Maucci (Museo Civico di Storia Naturale di Verona, Italy) collected in the same locality and in two different localities of Ecuador: Ibarra (7 specimens) and Paso de la Virgen (1 specimen) in March 1988.

The specimens, mounted in polyvinyl lactophenol, were observed up to maximum magnification using a phase contrast microscope.

Holotype and two paratypes of the new species were compared with the original description of *Echiniscus rufoviridis* du Bois-Reymond Marcus, 1944 and with five paratypes of *E. charrua* Claps & Rossi, 1997 kindly sent by these authors to enrich the collection of Binda & Pilato.